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Progress was impossible with such a system of religion; Art being subject to the will of the theocracy, the artists were its slaves, and it was the policy of the priests to keep the people always in the same state of servitude. We find, therefore, that after arriving at the state of perfection in which we now see their oldest monuments, they suddenly stopped all improvement in their art, and their later works are mere compositions, that is to say, imitations of those erected centuries before, so much so, that it is easier to determine the age of a structure of Egyptian art by the thickness of the mud which the Nile has periodically deposited at its base, than by the architecture or style of the building. What must have been the feelings of the artist of those times, who was forever kept in subjection to the dictation of this stern, inexorable priesthood, and whose highest flight of imagination was cut off remorselessly in the bud, before it had time to be matured? This can hardly be understood in our times, where perfect liberty in matters of art is considered quite natural.

But our next consideration must be, who brought on this liberty—who fought the battle of enfranchisement in matters of art? Long after the Egyptian art had arrived at the state of perfection beyond which it was not destined to advance, there began to be developed an art in another country under more favorable circumstances, which soon excelled all that had been achieved before, and which has not been surpassed in real artistic merit by any works that have been since produced.

The Greek nation, composed, as it was, out of small states, under a federative government, was the first of all nations to develop in its bosom that democratic liberty so necessary to destroy the bondage in which humanity had been held before by a despotic priesthood, and at the same time to free Art from the restraining and enervating servile influences under which it had been kept in its infancy. In the hands of the Greeks, Art soon progressed and improved, till under Pericles it attained the highest point of excellence. While the Egyptian art might be called classic to the Greek, the Grecian art was a romantic art; it was highly creative, adapted to the country and climate, and expressive of the materials which were used for their works. Their buildings are so fully in harmony with the formations of the locality, that it may be said that they complete its landscape; and besides all this, they were of forms of such beauty as have never since been surpassed or equalled. And still their forms and their whole system of architecture were so simple, their mode of construction so easily comprehended, that one cannot help asking the question, what is this beauty, what are the principles, and what is the law which regulates their art? The answer must be sought in the truthfulness with which their structures expressed the immutable laws of nature. Their structures, so to speak, grew naturally out of the soil on which they stood, making, through their broad base, a solid body with the rock, on which and out of which they were built; the forms given to each part of the superstructure were such as to be invariably natural to the material out of which it was made, and such as to express forcibly the *nature of the service* for which it was intended. For example, let us take the Doric column; its form is circular, broad at the base, and with a gentle decrease of diameter, tapers towards the summit, at once suggesting the idea of stability and strength; its adornment consists in the fluting of the shaft, multiplying to the eye the number of the columns when viewed in a row, and at the same time making them appear lighter and less substantial, hence producing that exquisite pleasure to the mind of a great effect

achieved through seemingly small means. The column at the summit swells gently out into the capital; the fluting ceases just below the capital, because the latter has a distinct function from the column proper, and is the intermediate member between a vertical support, the column, and a horizontal weight, the architrave. The architrave is decorated simply with a label moulding, shielding the parts below from the weather; its height is just such as required by the laws of stability, and hence its strength is nowhere lessened by decoration. Above the architrave the triglyphs are a continuation of the vertical supports, and have the fluting as their natural decoration; the metopes are no integral part of the structure, and sometimes they are entirely left out, as they are a mere filling-in of the spaces left by the more necessary parts of the structure; their decoration, therefore, is left to the *fancy* of the artist. Here we find those exquisite pieces of sculpture which are the delight and the study of the artist of every time and every school. The cornice immediately over the triglyphs crowns the structure; its form is altogether to the purpose for which it is intended; its deeply undercut label-moulding and fascia shed the water freely, and preserve the building underneath. The pediment or gable suggests a natural termination to the structure expressive of the roof which covers it. The tympanum is filled with sculptures in most instances. The tiles of the roof on each side of the structure are expressed over the cornice by antifixes and heads of animals, which throw the water from the roof. It will have been remarked how all the integral parts of the structure have a decoration, inspired neither by the animal nor vegetable kingdom, but entirely inspired by the nature of the stone or marble out of which the structure is composed, and it is in the invention of these forms that the Grecian architecture is so sublime—forms not to be found in animate nature, but deduced on philosophic principles from the substance and qualities of a material which has no given form in nature. It is to see such forms created by human genius, and brought to a perfection of beauty, that the mind most rejoices. This is the secret of the delight Grecian architecture produces. Those structures of small size, which appear to be so very plain and unostentatious, are the very gems of art, and the happiest efforts of ancient architects.

(To be continued.)

By order,

R. M. HUNT,
Secretary.

SONNET.

ALL beautiful things bring sadness, nor alone
Music, of which that wisest poet spake;
Because in us keen longings they awake,
After the good for which we pine and groan,
From which exiled we make perpetual moan
Till once again we may our spirits slake
At those clear streams, which man did first forsake,
When he would dig for fountains of his own.
All beauty makes us sad; yet not in vain—
For who would be ungracious to refuse,
Or not to use, this sadness without pain,
Whether it flows upon us from the hues
Of sunset, from the time of stars and dews,
From the clear skies, or waters pure of stain.

R. C. TRENCH.

* "I am never merry when I hear sweet music."

SHAKESPEARE.